

## Only A Job

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Rating: P6

Contents: Not trusting him is her job. But life's not only the job.

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A/N: Takes place during the nightly car ride in "Carnelian, Inc."; it's a different take on the scene and what they should have talked about - in other words: All The Times revisited (well, kinda - it's at least another episode-based story ;)).

Um, yes... maybe the "trust fall" doesn't fit to the story, so it might be a good idea to ignore it. Only for the story, of course \*grins\*

"Talk to me."

Teresa Lisbon groaned inwardly. She should have known it. He had been quiet a bit too long. But really, she didn't want to talk. She only wanted to sleep. Well, to pretend to be sleeping. Just do anything to avoid what she feared at the moment: him starting the whole trust conversation all over again. It had made her uncomfortable before, although she had managed to stay confident; but she knew that now, being as tired as she was, she wouldn't be able to hide her uneasiness. She hadn't wanted to hurt him, and yet she had had to do it. And now, as cowardly as she was when relationships of any kind were concerned, she just wanted to avoid the topic. To forget about it.

"Do I have to?" she asked indifferently and suppressed a yawn.

"No. I can just fall asleep, and we can drift into oncoming traffic. Your call." Behind her half closed eyelids, she rolled her eyes and sighed quietly. Maybe she should drive. *No, Lisbon, bad idea*. Who would be able to drive this nutshell besides Jane?

"Have you seen any good movies lately?" Talking about the weather probably would have been better. Though it wouldn't have sounded less stupid. But who cared. It was very late - or early, it depended on the point of view - and he left her to choose the topic of conversation. At least a good chance to stay on solid ground.

"No. You?"

"No." She really wished for a chance to get out of the car. There was an awkward silence stretching between them she decided to use to *fall asleep* again, when he raised his voice again. His annoyingly low and soothing voice that made her feel good, in a frightening way, especially when she was tired.

"You said it's your job." He sounded hesitantly, unsure maybe, and she couldn't decide if this was what was confusing her or if it were his words. Because both made no sense to her.

"Huh?" she responded. Talking to Patrick Jane with a sleepy mind as hers was one right now was a bad idea.

"You said it is your *job* to not trust me," he explained, emphasizing the word job to make clear what he meant. Not that it was necessary; the words alone told her everything. She would have been really surprised if she had gotten off so cheaply.

"So I did... I guess." She didn't know what this was leading to, but - so much about solid ground, because this imaginary one beneath her feet suddenly felt very unstable.

"The agent in you doesn't trust me. That's okay I think. But what about the woman, what about Teresa Lisbon?"

"What about her?" She groaned. "Me," she then corrected herself. "What about me? I don't trust y..." The whole meaning of his words, his analysis of her statement, hit her without a warning when her mind suddenly figured it out. He was right. There was a difference; she had to differentiate between the agent and the woman in her. Because the last knew that it wasn't her *job* to not trust him, while the first always had to remind herself of his untrustworthiness.

"You know, I meant what I said," he continued, unconsciously trying to make it easier for her. "I'll always be there for you. No matter what happens. I'm not going to let you down. Ever." There was a fierceness in his voice, a vibration she nearly felt, and she knew, she *felt* that he meant every word. And it wasn't that she hadn't known it before. Yes, he lied to her, mislead and tricked her. Constantly. But he had never done her any harm. Quite the contrary, he had always tried to keep her from harm. Of course there had been times things had gotten difficult and of course some situations had caused danger - but never had he done anything to put her, or her team for that matter, in danger on purpose or out of carelessness.

"I know," she finally told him, her voice barely audible. It was not easy to admit it, but somehow she owed it to him. "I guess I'm afraid that there may arise a situation in which I'll be forced to not trust you personally, too. It's easier to let the agent in me lead the way." She paused for a moment and took a deep breath. "One day this will be about Red John. I don't want us to stand on different sides, but there may come such a day. As an agent, I will never trust you then and will do everything to stop your every action that might harm or even kill Red John as long as there isn't a reason given by the situation. But as *me*, I wouldn't want to stand in your way, because I understand your desire for vengeance and am willing to trust you to do the right thing, whatever this is." The words came out of her and she wasn't able to stop them. She had never intended to tell him this, because him not knowing these innermost thoughts of hers helped her keeping some distance she needed to be still an agent when it came to him and his actions. Yet inside, she knew that, besides the agents of her team, he probably was the one person she could trust most. "You... you won't be able to take care of me when you're in prison - or worse. And... I care too much about you to let that happen."

Jane remained silent. He would have never expected such a confession from her. It wasn't easy to make him speechless, but she had managed it.

Her earlier words had indeed shocked him. And also hurt him. It hadn't just been pretending then. He had always thought that, while they of course have their differences, they were a team - partners who trusted each other. It was the ultimate and essential condition of their work. At least to his mind. He was willing to give up a lot for Lisbon if it was necessary to be able to help her, or save her. As much as he saw and read in people, he had never considered that she might not trust him.

They made life hard for each other, both being pigheaded and people who needed to control, but it was also no secret that they respected each other. He was sure of that. There was always this air of respect and esteem around them; he couldn't be wrong about that. And didn't they also care for each other? Deep inside they knew all too well that there was no reason to mistrust the other; to fear betrayal. Rather they would throw themselves in line than let the other get stabbed with a knife in the back. He would do it for her. And he was sure that she would also do it for him, too.

Wasn't this trust? Wasn't it trust to feel safe around the other? To rely on each other? To help each other? To talk and joke and feel comfortable around each other?

He knew it was. And he knew that she knew the same.

A movement to his right brought him off of his thoughts. Lisbon had leaned forward to get a better view of his face; obviously, judging from her expression, awaiting and, in some way, fearing his reaction. She looked at him expectantly, like she wanted to ask "Well, what do you say?", but the words never came out.

He wanted to tell her that there was never going to be such a situation in which she would have to decide to be the agent or the woman. He wanted to tell her that he would act on her advice and do nothing stupid. Nothing to put himself or even them in danger.

But was it really that easy? Nothing in his life had been easy in the past five years. His desire for justice was stronger than everything else. He knew he needed to defeat this feeling - for his own sake and the people he cared for. He wanted to find peace, to *rest*. But he had never allowed himself to let his guard down.

Maybe because there had never been anyone to really trust.

Not before he had met Teresa Lisbon. It had just taken him some time to realize it. To take a step into the right direction.

"I will always let you lead the way of my, of our actions. *Because I trust you,*" he whispered.

"Thank you," she simply answered, also whispering. Only the light pressure of her hand on his arm assured him of what she didn't dare to say out loud, but felt nevertheless.

*Whatever happens - in my heart, I trust you. And nothing else matters.*

END